

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A chemically ~~synthesized~~ modified double stranded short interfering nucleic acid (siNA) molecule ~~that directs cleavage of a Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) RNA via RNA interference (RNAi)~~, comprising a sense strand and an antisense strand wherein:
 - a. each strand of said siNA molecule is about ~~19~~ 18 to about ~~23~~ 27 nucleotides in length; and
 - b. ~~one strand~~ the antisense strand of said siNA molecule comprises a nucleotide sequence ~~having sufficient complementarity to said HBV RNA for the siNA molecule to direct cleavage of the HBV RNA via RNA interference. of about 18 to about 27 nucleotides that is complementary to a Hepatitis B Virus (HBV) nucleotide sequence comprising SEQ ID NO: 674; and~~
 - c. the sense strand is complementary to the antisense strand and comprises a portion of said HBV sequence of about 18 to about 27 nucleotides; and
 - d. about 100% of nucleotide positions in one or both strands of said siNA molecule are chemically modified.
2. (Canceled)
3. (Currently Amended) The siNA molecule of claim 1, wherein said siNA molecule comprises one or more ribonucleotides.
4. (Canceled)
5. (Canceled)
6. (Canceled)
7. (Canceled)

8. (Canceled)
9. (Canceled)
10. (Canceled)
11. (Canceled)
12. (Canceled)
13. (Canceled)
14. (Currently Amended) The siNA molecule of claim 6 1, wherein one or more purine nucleotides present in the said sense region strand are 2'-deoxy purine nucleotides.
15. (Currently Amended) The siNA molecule of claim 6 1, wherein one or more pyrimidine nucleotides present in the said sense region strand are 2'-deoxy-2'-fluoro pyrimidine nucleotides.
16. (Currently Amended) The siNA molecule of claim 9 1, wherein the ~~fragment comprising said sense region strand~~ includes a terminal cap moiety at a 5'-end, a 3'-end, or both of the 5' and 3' ends of the ~~fragment comprising said sense region strand~~.
17. (Currently Amended) The siNA molecule of claim 16, wherein said terminal cap moiety is an inverted deoxy abasic moiety.
18. (Currently Amended) The siNA molecule of claim 6 1, wherein one or more pyrimidine nucleotides of present in said antisense ~~region strand~~ are 2'-deoxy-2'-fluoro pyrimidine nucleotides.
19. (Currently Amended) The siNA molecule of claim 6 1, wherein one or more purine nucleotides of present in said antisense ~~region strand~~ are 2'-O-methyl purine nucleotides.
20. (Currently Amended) The siNA molecule of claim 6 1, wherein one or more purine nucleotides present in said antisense ~~region strand~~ comprise 2'-deoxy- purine nucleotides.
21. (Currently Amended) The siNA molecule of claim ~~18~~ 1, wherein said antisense ~~region strand~~ comprises a terminal phosphorothioate internucleotide linkage at the 3' end of said antisense ~~region strand~~.

22. (Canceled)
23. (Canceled)
24. (Canceled)
25. (Canceled)
26. (Canceled)
27. (Canceled)
28. (Canceled)
29. (Canceled)
30. (Currently Amended) The siNA molecule of claim 9 1, wherein a ~~5' end of the fragment~~ comprising said antisense ~~region~~ strand ~~optionally~~ includes a terminal phosphate group.
31. (Currently Amended) A composition comprising the siNA molecule of claim 1 in pharmaceutically acceptable carrier or diluent.
32. (Canceled)
33. (New) The siNA molecule of claim 1, wherein said chemical modification is a phosphorothioate internucleotide linkage, 2'-O-methyl ribonucleotide, 2'-deoxy-2'-fluoro ribonucleotide, 2'-deoxy ribonucleotide, universal base nucleotide, 5-C-methyl nucleotide, inverted deoxyabasic or any combination thereof.